

# PROMOTING YOUTH CIVIC ENGAGEMENT (PYCE) QUARTERLY REPORT

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For more information please  
contact:

America-Mideast  
Educational and Training  
Services, Inc.

[www.amideast.org](http://www.amideast.org)

# Making a Difference

PYCE is preparing Peer Network Members to address the needs of at-risk youth, by leading life-changing education, sport and community-service activities according to cross-cutting themes such as:

- Career Readiness and Youth Employability
- Health, Nutrition and Wellness
- Fitness, Sport and Team-based Recreation
- Entrepreneurship and Home-based Income Generation
- Gender Equity and Outreach to Disadvantaged Groups
- First Aid and Safety
- Natural Resource Conservation and Sustainable Development
- Dropout Prevention and Second Chance Learning



Figure 1: In cooperation with the Aden Coast Guard, PYCE supports safety training for Peer Network Members. The training was conducted at Tawahi Public Beach and MoYS Rawda Club in Aden.

## ***Executive Summary of Focus Areas for Quarter 1***

In the first quarter of PYCE Phase II, activities were centered upon four main areas: 1) increasing the type of activities offered to youth, including female youth; 2) increasing the number of partners who support youth training and sport activities; 3) building youth safety knowledge and skills, and 4) increasing safety standards at K-12 schools and public youth clubs. These focus areas were aligned with the Project's goals and overarching USAID objective to increase Yemen's stability. They also incorporated cross-cutting themes, which can be viewed in the discussion box to the right of this page.

## ***Promoting Youth Civic Engagement (PYCE) Program Objectives***

The PYCE project is designed to support USAID's objective of increasing Yemen's stability through targeted interventions in vulnerable areas by (1) improving community-based institutions and mechanisms to ensure active participation in governance and locally driven solutions strengthened; and (2) improving access to and the delivery of quality services.

To support this USAID objective, the PYCE project objectives have sought: to strengthen the role of moderate religious actors in positively influencing Yemeni youth, and to establish and support youth sports and recreational programs. In response to changes in Yemen's political and socio-economic context, which has been influenced recently by the Arab Spring that led to the Yemeni Revolution, a new Transitional Government, and an ongoing process of national reconciliation and priority-setting known as the National Dialogue, the language of these objectives has been enhanced. These objectives have been expanded to foster a more diverse set of program components that can accomplish the overarching objectives of USAID in a new Yemen. The proposed, enhanced objectives are: 1) strengthen and increase interaction between youth and influential community actors, including moderate religious actors; and 2) empower youth to positively affect their local communities through sports, recreational programs, and other community-based engagement activities.

## ***Partners and Beneficiaries***

AMIDEAST and its partners Peace Players International (PPI) and the National Organization for the Development of Society (NODS), in cooperation with the Ministries of Youth and Sports (MoYS), Endowments and Guidance (MoEG) and Education (MoE), has adopted a technical approach to accomplish these objectives that support strengthening youth participation in their communities via civic engagement.

As a part of this approach, PYCE has galvanized more than 100 community and moderate religious actors known as Steering Committee (SC) Members. SC Members serve as volunteers that mentor PYCE direct beneficiaries, known as Peer Network (PN) Members, promote PYCE throughout their communities and monitor PYCE renovations and other activities. PYCE has trained more than 500 PN Members, which have in turn, trained more than 6,000 of their at-risk peers. In addition to training, PN Members and volunteers have rehabilitated and upgraded more than 50 MoE schools and MoYS youth clubs. These efforts have improved the quality of education and increased access to after school activities for more than 30,000 children and adolescents in five governorates.

PYCE leadership and development training for Peer Network Members has included the Community Engagement (CE) Workshop, Training of Trainers (TOT) Program and Sport and Activity Coordinator (SAC) Program, along with ongoing monitoring and experiential learning opportunities. These activities advance skills in peer-facilitation, community needs assessment, program development, the formation of community teams and leagues, evaluation of participant learning and gathering long-term support for community programs.

## *Peer Network Activities*

Once PN Members successfully complete PYCE leadership and development training, they conduct community appraisals, plan and implement youth-centered activities. PN activities are implemented as Community Grants and team-based programs, which encompass awareness, sports and recreational and community service activities. Awareness sessions are developed to provide life and vocational skills training, as well as personal and character development. Peer Network activities are based on the sport-for-development model, which utilizes sport, physical activity and play to achieve development goals in sectors such as education and health. In addition, community service activities are performed to augment PYCE solar system renovations and upgrades and include clean-ups, maintenance and gardening. The solar systems, in turn, power lights and fans, which prevent otherwise frequent disruptions of activities when power outages occur. Solar power plays an important role in enabling the Peer Network to extend activities into the evenings, where youth can become positively engaged. Solar system renovations also reduce operational costs for youth centers, promote natural resource conservation and serve as an educational tool that supports science and technology curricula. These events directly improve the capacity of youth centers and address critical needs.

## *Project Implementation*

PYCE Phase I began in October 2010 and was extended through June 30, 2014. Throughout Phase I, PYCE operated in Sana'a, Aden, Lahej and Marib. Moreover, in the last few months of Phase I, PYCE expanded its operations to the governorate of Abyan. Yet, in keeping with the program timeline, close-out activities were conducted in Marib and Sana'a in May 2014. While preparations were underway to close activities in the remaining areas, PYCE was awarded an extension through 2015. Subsequently, PYCE incorporated the lessons learned from Phase I and embarked on a second phase for the project on July 1, 2014.

PYCE undertook feasibility assessments and determined that Marib was too insecure and operations could not resume in that governorate. However, PYCE determined the project could be implemented in Sana'a, Aden, Abyan and Lahej. Therefore, from July through August 2014, ongoing and follow-on meetings were conducted for Steering Committee Members, Peer Network Members, partners and other PYCE participants, in order to plan and implement Community Grants and team-based activities for PYCE Phase II and the next fiscal year beginning October 2014. These meetings also included discussion sessions about potential expansion sites and increasing support for gender equity and disadvantaged groups. By September 2014, Peer Network Members' support for these priorities was evident. New safety activities were being piloted and successful interventions from Phase I were expanded into new youth centers. Moreover, female Peer Network Members initiated meetings with educators at K-12 schools and youth clubs, in order to promote female participation in sports and gather support for female sport competitions.

The quantitative accomplishments or outputs from this quarter are as follows:

## **Quantitative Accomplishments**

**Intermediate Result 1:** Strengthen and increase interaction between youth and influential community actors, including moderate religious actors

Activities	Former Target	FY 2014 Target	FY 2015 Target	Achievement this quarter	Total for Project
# of community actors engaged in governorate level meetings	250	100	300	248	2,366
# of Steering Committee Meetings	25	10	24	5	79
# of Meetings for PYCE participants at youth centers	27	10	24	2	75
# of Community Grants awarded to Peer Network (PN) Members	18	10	15	9	100
# of Partnerships developed by PN with businesses (1.5.1), CBOs & local initiatives (1.5.2) and government & youth-serving entities (1.5.3)	n/a	n/a	1.5.1 = 5 1.5.2 = 4 1.5.3 = 5	1.5.1 = 0 1.5.2 = 4 1.5.3 = 5	64

*Please note:* The number of partnerships is a new FY 2015 indicator. While reporting requirements begin with the fiscal year on October 1, 2014, in order to illustrate substantial community buy-in and support from Phase I, this indicator has been added to this matrix.

**Intermediate Result 2:** Empower youth to positively affect their local communities through sports, recreational programs and other community-based engagement activities

Activities	Former Target	FY 2014 Target	FY 2015 Target	Achievement this quarter	Total for Project
# of participants trained by PN	1,350	300	3,000	139	6,379
# of channels of communication by Peer Network Members to disseminate info about activities (2.7.1), gather info from youth about their needs (2.7.2) and respond to inputs from community members about youth activities (2.7.3)	n/a	n/a	2.7.1 = 50 2.7.2 = 10 2.7.3 = 10	2.7.1 = 5 2.7.2 = 0 2.7.3 = 0	2.7.1 = 5 2.7.2 = 0 2.7.3 = 0



*Please note:* Communications channels is a revised indicator planned for PYCE Phase II and FY 2015. Totals are current as of October 30, 2014. However, data collection from field sites is ongoing and totals are subject to change.

After a brief recess for Eid Al Fitr, 5 Steering Committee meetings were held for Members in all



PYCE-supported governorates. Meetings were held with continuing Members as well as new Members in Sana'a and Abyan. In addition, 2 meetings of PYCE participants were held at youth centers and more than 200 stakeholders attended governorate-level meetings.

PYCE Peer Network (PN) Members developed more than 60 partnerships with businesses, local associations, government and youth-serving institutions in Phase I. PN Members will continue to strengthen relationships with these partners in order to sustain youth activities.

Moreover, partnerships were increased in this quarter, with

support from 9 businesses and organizations or government entities such as the Aden Tennis Club, Yemen Petroleum Company and Aden Coast Guard.

With strong community buy-in, PN Members implemented 9 Community Grants, training 139 at-risk youth in their neighborhoods. Community Grants have been particularly impactful in the expansion governorate of Abyan where Peer Network Members worked with volunteers to rehabilitate multi-purpose courts and soccer fields at MoYS Bana and Hassan Clubs. Grants were conducted with more than 100 youth and included soccer competitions, clean-ups and workshops on fitness and youth civic engagement in cooperation with MoE Waddah Sawahel School.

PN Members are promoting their activities on Facebook and through mobile applications such as WhatsApp. They are also sensitive to the needs and aspirations of youth, conducting assessments, soliciting suggestions and responding to feedback. This 2-way communication process, ensures locally-driven solutions are formed and programs are co-constructed.

Figure 2 (above): Youth enjoy newly rehabilitated courts at MoYS Bana Club in Abyan.

## **Challenges**

Since July 2014, Yemen has been in the midst of a further political transition that has culminated in the Peace and National Partnership Agreement signed in September 2014. The Agreement seeks to accelerate the implementation of the National Dialogue outcomes to include the development of a new constitution, the appointment of a new prime minister, and power sharing with more parties in a new cabinet. Amidst the uncertainty surrounding these events, the PYCE Project has sought to ensure continuous alignment with Yemen's transition process. Further, meetings and youth-led activities, while continuing apace, are organized and scheduled to assure the security of all project beneficiaries.

## ***What's Next?***

### **1. Leadership and Training:**

PYCE expects to conduct a CE Workshop for aspiring PN Members and other youth leaders next quarter. Therefore, a minimum of 4 Participatory Analysis for Community Action (PACA) activities are anticipated on or before November 30, 2014. After successful completion of PACA activities, youth can apply for membership in the Peer Network and participate in interviews conducted by SC Members. PYCE anticipates new PN Members will be selected on or before January 2015. SAC and TOT programs will be conducted for new PN Members in February 2014. Thirty PN Members will participate in the SAC Program and 28 will participate in the TOT Program.

### **2. Solar System Installations and Equipment:**

In addition to this leadership and development training, PYCE will complete at least 2 new site renovations. PYCE is currently meeting with stakeholders to determine the sites that will be renovated. Renovations are anticipated to begin in December 2014 and conclude on or before mid-February 2015.

### **3. Literacy and Dropout Prevention:**

In support of International Literacy Day and in accord with the Project's cross-cutting theme of dropout prevention, a series of reading activities and competitions will be held for 60 days in several K-12 public schools and youth clubs. Participating institutions include MoYS 22 May Club and MoE Soqatra School in Sana'a, MoE Iqbal School in Lahej, 22 May and Waddah Sawahel Schools in Abyan and MoE Al Saada School in Aden. Literacy activities were initiated in September 2014 and are expected to conclude on or before December 2014.

### **4. Sport Marathon:**

In accord with the Project's cross-cutting theme of fitness, health and wellness, PYCE will support activities for a marathon in Aden in December 2014. The marathon will be conducted in cooperation with the Mercure Hotel. Alongside this high-impact sport, workshops on nutrition and first aid will be provided.

## **5. Sport Tennis Competition**

Regular tennis practices are underway at MoYS Gela Club in Aden. As a result of cooperation between PN Members, the Aden Tennis Club, Yemen Petroleum Company and business Adnan Al Kaf, youth have access to tennis-related equipment and their first tennis competition was held in July 2014 with more than 50 youth. An additional competition will be held in December 2014.

## **6. Youth Life Guards**

In cooperation with the Aden Coast Guard and MoYS Rawda Club, PN Members implemented a PYCE Community Grant in September 2014. The Grant was focused upon reducing the number of water-related accidents and fatalities. With high demand from PN Members and local youth, PYCE and the Aden Coast Guard will support additional training in first aid, diving and emergency response from November 2014 to January 2015. Youth will learn how to rescue people in need of assistance and provide life-saving care until help arrives. In addition, once youth complete training, they will work in teams as life guards and patrol a section of the public beach in Tawahi. Local residents will be able to enjoy greater comfort, knowing that these youth volunteers are ready to assist if the need arises.

## **7. Science Competitions**

In keeping with the Project's cross-cutting themes such as career readiness and gender equity, PYCE will host competitions at K-12 public schools and youth clubs. The aim of the competition is to encourage greater interest in science and science-related careers among youth, particularly women and girls. The competition will be comprised of science fairs and exhibits, based upon small projects which the students design themselves. The institutions which post the minimum number of youth science projects, will receive educational supplies to augment science and computer laboratories and sport equipment to expand recreational activities. PYCE will provide support for these competitions in November 2014, with fairs and exhibits anticipated in January 2015. Participating institutions include MoE 14 October and Sadeeq Schools in Aden and MoE Showkani School in Lahej.

## **Qualitative Accomplishments**

In addition to some of the quantitative accomplishments listed above, PYCE provides at least 3 major benefits to its Peer Network Members and youth volunteers. These benefits are listed in the following chart.



Benefits	Peer Network Members and youth volunteers
<b><i>PYCE meets youth where they are</i></b>	<p>PYCE works with youth and encourages them to improve conditions in the areas where they live. Rather than train youth for opportunities outside of Yemen and contribute to the “brain drain” that negatively impacts many developing countries, PYCE implements non-formal educational programs and awards grants to youth who are dedicated to improving conditions at home.</p>
<b><i>PYCE uses a strengths-based approach to help youth gain skills and become active citizens</i></b>	<p>PYCE encourages youth to develop programs which directly respond to the needs in their communities. PYCE then supports youth, as they scale up and sustain their own programs, which allows entire neighborhoods to become uplifted together. Their accomplishments have been widely covered in the media and they are now being recognized by local leaders, as participants, whose voices are incorporated in the process of decision-making.</p> <p>In July 2014, PYCE hosted iftars in Sana’a and Aden, where youth presented their accomplishments to ministry officials, educators, coaches, members of the US Mission, media representatives and larger business community. In July and August 2014, PYCE gathered youth and Local Council Members together, where youth talked openly about their needs and concerns and presented ideas for the 2015 Yemeni youth development agenda. Youth are also learning about the democratic process, through the election of PN Member Council representatives. More than 10 representatives (PNAC) have been elected and are continuing to work alongside youth centers and local leaders.</p>
<b><i>PYCE provides rare second-chance opportunities for youth to reinvent themselves</i></b>	<p>Opportunities for most Yemeni youth to self-develop are either too costly, too far away or too exclusive. Yet, PYCE supports free activities afterschool, on the weekends and in the summer for youth from diverse social and economic backgrounds. These activities are especially important for youth who need second chances (for example, youth who dropped out of school, youth in rural areas as well as youth whose aspirations were not addressed in the formal education system and need a non-formal framework to build skills). As a result of participation in these activities, youth have transformed from feeling like opportunities for them are quite limited, to providing opportunities for others. Moreover, many youth, who were previously unskilled, have become experts in safety and emergency response. Though Yemen is experiencing profound and persistent conflict, these youth have continued to improve safety standards at K-12 schools and youth clubs. They are training teachers, parents and students in fire prevention, in extinguishing fires safely and in removing potential fire hazards. Youth are also learning about universal precautions, first aid, water safety and hygiene. It is now their aim to reduce the number of accidents, injuries and preventable deaths in their neighborhoods.</p> <p><i>PYCE is one of the only projects in the country which offers this number, quality and array of opportunities for youth.</i></p>



In addition to education and safety training, PYCE renovations and upgrades have vastly increased the capacity of youth centers to sustain sport and recreational youth activities. Indoor ping pong, billiard, board and chess games are now commonplace at MoYS Mena, Rawdha and Gela Clubs in Aden. Moreover, these Clubs also host regular practices and/or competition in soccer, basketball, volleyball, boxing, Taekwondo, tennis

and futsal. Soccer, ping pong and volleyball are mainstays at MoYS Azal Club in Aden and Intalak Club in Lahej, which will be cooperating with PN Members in December 2014, to promote natural resource conservation and sustainable development through greening activities and workshops on solar energy.

PYCE is currently working to expand youth activities at MoYS Azal and Bilquis Clubs in Sana'a, MoE 14 October School in Aden and MoYS Khanfer Club in Abyan, particularly for women and girls. These latter Clubs, will be instrumental in implementing workshops focused on home-based microenterprise and outreach to youth in rural areas.

PYCE is also working to increase its health, nutrition and wellness portfolio in cooperation with MoYS Mansourah Stadium in Aden. As a large facility, the Stadium can easily support a series of rotating workshops where youth learn and practice lifting weights without injury, stationery exercises with common household. These workshops are planned for Spring 2015 and build upon previous interventions, such as a solar system renovation and Community Grant to increase the Stadium's water supply, completed in June and August 2014 respectively.



At MoYS Shamsan Club in Aden, PN Members will organize a fitness competition in December 2014. The competition will involve prizes for Club Members and local youth, who achieve their fitness and health goals while improving conditions in their neighborhood through volunteerism.

These activities are significant in part, because they reinforce the capacity of youth to help themselves and help "build community" at the same time. It is this qualitative accomplishment that provides a counterweight to the brain drain and a hope for a vibrant, tolerant society.

Figures 3 and 4 above: A PYCE Peer Network Member conducts reading activities in support of International Literacy at MoYS 22 May Club in Sana'a and local youth enjoy recreational games at MoYS Gela Club in Aden, where PYCE recently renovated the multi-purpose play court and installed a solar power system.